



The Avenue Project Task Force

Wednesday, April 19, 2006

6:00pm-8:00pm

Dorchester House

1353 Dorchester Avenue

Meeting Notes

Attendance:

Task Force Members: Marisa Coleman, Edward Crowley, Sean Dennison, Eileen Fenton, Michael Mackan, Richard O'Mara, Arlene Lopes, Anne Riley, Leslie MacWeeney, My Lam (Viet-Aid Rep)

Inés Soto-BRA, Jeremy Rosenberger-BRA, Ralph DeNisco-BTD, Lauren Smyth-ONS, Andre Porter-DND

I. Welcome and Introductions

- Meeting was called to order by the Dorchester Avenue Project Manager Inés Soto.
- The group introduced themselves to Lauren Smyth, the new Dorchester ONS coordinator. Lauren told the group she would be taking over for Molly Dunford's position.
- Ines asked the group to review the notes and if they were correct. The group approved the March working group notes.
- Ines told the group she wanted to move the discussion about Priority Locations to the end the meeting.

II. RFP Updates

- Ines mentioned to the group they had five RFP responses from consultants. In the upcoming weeks there will be a meeting with the city's Dot Ave selection committee at the BRA.
- Ines asked the group if it should be conducted during the day or evening. She wondered which would be better attended by the group. The group decided on the afternoon as being more hospitable.
- Ines went on to explain the Task Force can ask questions after the city portion of the interview. Ines envisioned the attending Task Force members reporting back to the Task Force as a whole. She told the group the interviews will be conducted in the BRA board room and she will notify the Task Force when the date is scheduled.
- Ines told the group she hopes to have the interviews during the first week of May and a recommendation for a consultant for the Action Plan to the BRA Director by the end of the first week in May. Ines mentioned she didn't anticipate any hold-ups to the process.

- Ed gave feedback to the group about the RFP process. He said the BRA did a good job presenting the Action Plan to the consultants and many questions were raised to the BRA that were answered (at the RFP scoping session).

III. Revisit Priority Locations

- Ines told the group she wanted to make it clear that certain areas of the Ave will have more emphasis. She said the reason she wanted the group to revisit these priorities is to give the consultants an idea of the Task Force priorities.

IV. Fields Corner Mall Update

- Ines told the group, in case they didn't read the Dorchester Reporter that the Mayor met with the Cifrino's. The Mayor was able to persuade them to improve the property. Ines mentioned the improvement and communications with the Cifrino's would be led by DND. She also mentioned to the group that AJ Wright would be a new tenant at the mall. Ines went on to say updates will be presented to the Task Force.
- Arlene mentioned Fields Corner Main Streets is hopeful and embraces the perspective changes.
- Leslie asked Ines if BD's would be empty. Ines replied that she wasn't sure and said she would find out. Leslie was also curious if the space could be utilized as art studios while they are in transition. Ines mentioned she would look into it.

V. Peabody Square Meeting Update

- Ralph gave an update on Peabody Square. He said the improvement for the square started from St. Mark's visioning sessions for Peabody Square.
- Ralph said they will have three meetings by early June. He said the next meeting will probably be the 2nd week of May.
- By the end of the year, they hope to have 100% design
- Ralph also highlighted the first meeting's PowerPoint is on the Dot Ave website.
- Ralph added the art component of the square improvement was awarded to Dorchester Arts Collaborative. He mentioned some of the non-selected proposals would be useful for other parts of the Ave.
- Leslie mentioned her group submitted for the Peabody proposal. She said she has also been in discussions with the MBTA regarding art installations at Ashmont T-Station.
- Ines told the group they invited Barbara Boylan to attend tonight's meeting, but she couldn't make it. Ines went on to say Barbara will be joining the Task Force soon.
- Sean asked if the T has been responsive. Ines replied that Barbara came to an IAT and wants to come to a Task Force meeting. Ines said the MBTA overpass in Field's Corner came up in conversations, but Barbara said any repairs or painting would cost a lot of money.

- Leslie added that an art fund for each T station existed, but has since been dissolved. She said they came to a DAC meeting but were not pleased with art for Fields Corner T station.
- Ed mentioned to the group they came to a Fields Corner (FC) community meeting and gave a presentation. FC was under the impression that they were moving ahead and selecting art pieces.
- Getting back to Peabody Square, Vineet said they can do a presentation next meeting, and a more thorough presentation in June.

VI. Permitting and Signage Workshop Update/Outreach

- Jeremy told the group about the upcoming signage and permitting workshops. He mentioned the dates and that responses to the workshops have been positive and they hope to get large attendances at each workshop.

VII. ISD Enforcement Discussion

- Ines took the group through the internal ISD process related to code enforcement.
- Ines told the group the Task Force needs to figure out what is important to go after. Ines went on to say that Wednesday's are the best days to assign or talk to someone at ISD about Dot Ave issues.
- Ines went on to say she needs the Task Force to support the upcoming signage enforcement efforts.
- Mike told the group that usually after one or two people deal with ISD's enforcement, the rest will fall in line with the enforcement efforts and follow suit.
- Ed said there is always room for adjustment in the rules (ISD). He mentioned they had code enforcement come to the Ave twice and write violations. He said he was already upset about the grates at Melville. He said the signage issues in Savin Hill doesn't bother him as much. Ed said overall, things are slipping by through ISD. He said signage businesses want to know the rules. He said you can't pick and choose along the Avenue.
- Ines explained to the group that they will be formulating a strategy with ISD and will work on collaboration in the future. She said city agencies will have to think about internal coordination
- Ines went on to say that as a Task Force, lots of issues like this (signage & grates) will present themselves. She asked the group if they want to deal with these issues. Ines said they need to be realistic about what they (the Task Force) want to take on.
- Ed replied by stating they need to have a position on the Task Force toward issues.

VIII. Meeting Procedure

- Ines told the group the ISD discussion is a good lead-in to Task Force meeting procedures. She mentioned the group needs to start taking votes. Ines explained that as they move forward, other serious issues will arise. She told the group that they need to take votes when there needs to be a stance.
- Arlene added that they either speak with one voice or let the issue go.
- Marisa mentioned there should be a process in anything they discuss.
- Ines replied that there needs to be a hardcopy procedure.
- Sean asked when they will see a procedure.
- Ines said they'll have to have it in place by June.
- Ed told the group consensus was an option at the start of the Task Force.

IX. Other

- Ed mentioned to the group that St. Marks Main Streets suggested a Zoning workshop that can maybe take place in the summer
- Ines told the group about a press release that went out describing the many things the Dot Ave Project has accomplished and also highlighted the upcoming signage and permitting workshops.
- Ines also mentioned that the next Task Force meeting would be a community meeting at the Dorchester House on May 17th.
- Ines told the group if there is anything they would like to add to let her know through email.
- Ines mentioned the Parks Department follow-up for the tree inventory will require an official request she would like the Task Force to support it.
- Leslie suggested they utilize hanging plants instead of planters along Dot Ave.
- Richard thought the planters looked nice, but a combination would probably be best.
- Ed highlighted the Dot Ave parade is coming up. He said by the next meeting, they should try to develop something for the Task Force. Ed told the group the parade is the first Sunday in June.

X. Adjourn

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm